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ABSTRACT

In fall 1974, 126 students who had been enrolled in vocational-technical programs at Leeward Community College during the 1973-74 academic year, and who had petitioned for graduation, were sent follow-up surveys. This report details their reactions to academic counseling and registration assistance. The 96 responses represent a 76 percent response rate. Seventy of the respondents had received the associate degree, and 26 had received a certificate. The vocational areas that were most heavily represented were secretarial science and accounting. About 20 percent of the students felt that they did not need counseling, but over 40 percent reported that they could have benefited from additional counseling. Most of the respondents were not veterans, but those who were felt that the veterans' counseling program was either good or bad improved subsequent to their graduation. About 13 percent of all respondents felt that the quality of academic counseling was excellent, and 30 percent rated it as good. However, about 10 percent of the respondents said it was poor. Most of the students felt that the college was meeting their registration assistance needs, but many noted a need for more vocational offerings in the evening. Data are tabulated, and the survey instrument is appended, along with comments of the respondents. (NHM)

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# A Report of the Satisfaction of Recent Vocational-Technical Graduates with the Academic Counseling and Registration Assistance Received

April 10, 1975

Office of Institutional Research
Leeward Community College
University of Hawaii

## Introduction

As part of its normal operating procedure, the State Department of Vocational Education requests a follow-up study on all community college graduates who have been graduated from vocational education programs the previous year. This follow-up survey usually takes place in the fall. Data are summarized and analyzed by the Office of the State Director of Vocational Education. However, responsibility for gathering these data lie with the individual institutions. At Leeward Community College, Mr. Dick Wong, who is the Coordinator for Cooperative Education, has conducted this survey for the past two years.

In the fall of 1974, the results of the previous year's study were distributed to each of the counselors at Leeward Community College.* They subsequently asked Mr. Wong to meet with them to discuss the results. During the meeting, several counselors indicated interest in obtaining feedback from these graduates regarding the academic counseling and registration assistance students had received. These areas have not been covered in the follow-up studies of previous years. Mr. Wong agreed to provide a supplemental questionnaire to his 1974 survey. He subsequently prepared a single-page instrument having a substantial degree of face validity. This report is a summary of the findings of this survey.

The instrument employed solicited both descriptive and evaluative information. It was sent out with the questionnaires distributed as part of the regular Vocational Education Follow-up Study. As such, it has one apparent methodological weakness.

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*The results of the 1973-74 study have not as yet been received from the Office of the State Director of Vocational Education.

As is was a mail survey, the addresses of persons who had participated in the program needed to be obtained. For the purposes of the Vocational Education Follow-up Study, this information was taken from the forms prepared by the students at the time they applied for graduation. Therefore, only those students in the program who made formal application for an Associate of Science degree or a Certificate of Achievement were utilized. No doubt many other students participated in the program but failed to solicit application for a degree or certificate. Others may have failed to complete a program.

For an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational-technical program and the counseling provided such majors, information from all groups participating in the program was necessary. However, the addresses of these persons could not and, at the present time, still cannot be obtained. This survey then represents an admittedly imperfect effort to get as much evaluative feedback on academic counseling, registration assistance, and veterans' assistance that could be expediently and realistically obtained.

The questionnaires were mailed to the graduates on October 4, 1974. The names of respondents who replied were checked as they were received. A second mailing was forwarded to respondents who had not sent their first questionnaire back. The cutoff date for response for all questionnaires was December 20, 1974.

The following represents a descriptive narrative and statistical portrayal of the information derived from that survey.

## Findings

One hundred and twenty-six students, that had been enrolled in vocational-technical programs in the academic year 1973-74 and who had petitioned for graduation, were sent questionnaires by the Office of Cooperative Education. Of this number, 102 were returned. However, six of these were not received in time to be included

in the analysis. The number of questionnaires available for processing was 96, or 76 percent of the total number of potential respondents contacted. All 26 of the former students who had received a Certificate of Achievement returned their questionnaires. Seventy of the 100 graduates who received the A.S. degree returned their forms. The population surveyed and the sample available for analysis are summarized in Table 1. Most students proved to be day students. In fact, 88 percent of all respondents fell in this category. Only about one in ten attended school at night. (Refer to Table 2.)

Secretarial Science and Accounting were the most heavily subscribed majors reported by the participants in the survey. In fact, these two majors accounted for more than half of all of those reporting. Only one was enrolled in Hospitality Education.

Of those who received an Associate of Science degree, 24 percent were in Secretarial Science, 22 percent in Accounting, and 16 percent in Drafting (refer to Table 4). There were no Associate of Science respondents in Hospitality Education and only one in the Recreational Instructor Program.

Secretarial Science and Accounting also proved to be those programs having the highest enrollment among those receiving Certificates of Achievement. Forty-six percent were enrolled in Secretarial Science and twenty-three percent in Accounting (refer to Table 5).

The respondents were asked to report if they had specifically solicited counseling. Approximately one in three had not. In fact, 17 percent decided they "did not need" counseling (refer to Table 6). However, 41 percent of the total population studied indicated they would have preferred "more" counseling (refer to Table 7).

The last set of queries solicited more precise information regarding satisfaction

Table I

Summary of Respondents
by Degree or Certificate
of Achievement

| Program | Composition of Population Surveyed | | Composition of Sample Available for Analysis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| A.S. Degree | 100 | 79 | 70 | 73 |
| Certificate of Achievement | 26 | 21 | 26 | 27 |
| Total | 126 | 100 | 96* | 100 |

*This represents 76 percent of the total surveyed. One hundred percent of the graduates with a Certificate of Achievement responded. Only 70 percent of the graduates receiving an A.S. degree returned their questionnaires. As a consequence, those who received a Certificate of Achievement are proportionately more heavily represented in the sample available for analysis than in the population actually surveyed. While they were only 21 percent of the population surveyed, they comprised 27 percent of the sample analyzed.

Table 2

Summary of Respondents
by Day or Night Attendance

| Time of Attendance | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Day Students | 84 | 88 |
| Night Students | 12 | 12 |
| Total | 96 | 100 |

Table 3

Summary of All Respondents
By Major

| Major Program | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Accounting | 21 | 22 |
| Automotive Technology | 9 | 9 |
| Computer Science | 3 | 3 |
| Drafting Technology | 11 | 12 |
| Hospitality Education | 1 | 1 |
| Library Technology | 8 | 8 |
| Management | 8 | 8 |
| Marine Technology | 3 | 3 |
| Recreational Instructor Program | 3 | 3 |
| Secretarial Science | 29 | 31 |
| | 96 | 100 |

Table 4

Summary of Respondents
Who Received Associate of
Sciences Degrees By
Major

| Major Program | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Accounting | 15 | 22 |
| Automotive Technology | 7 | 10 |
| Computer Science | 3 | 4 |
| Drafting Technology | 11 | 16 |
| Hospitality Education | - | - |
| Library Technology | 5 | 7 |
| Management | 8 | 12 |
| Marine Technology | 3 | 4 |
| Recreational Instructor Program | 1 | 1 |
| Secretarial Science | 17 | 24 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

Table 5

Summary of Respondents
Who Received Certificates of Achievement
By Major

| Major Program | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Accounting | 6 | 23 |
| Automotive Technology | 2 | 8 |
| Computer Science | - | - |
| Drafting Technology | - | - |
| Hospitality Education | 1 | 4 |
| Library Technology | 3 | 11 |
| Management | - | - |
| Marine Technology | - | - |
| Recreational Instructor Program | 2 | 8 |
| Secretarial Science | 12 | 46 |
| | 26 | 100 |

Table 6

Number and Percentage
of Respondents Receiving Counseling
Assistance

| Did you receive counseling? | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 64 | 66 |
| No | 15 | 16 |
| Did Not Need | 16 | 17 |
| No Response | 1 | 1 |
| | 96 | 100 |

Table 7

Number and Percentage
of Respondents by Preferred
Amount of Counseling

| Preferred Amount of Counseling | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Less | 1 | 1 |
| The Same | 37 | 39 |
| More | 39 | 41 |
| Doesn't Apply | 18 | 18 |
| No Response | 1 | 1 |
| | 96 | 100 |

with the specific types of counseling. About one in three respondents felt the quality of academic counseling was "good" (refer to Table 8). However, about 10 percent of the persons returning questionnaires thought it was "poor." Thirteen percent felt it was "excellent."

The pattern of response was generally more favorable when the graduates were asked about their satisfaction with the assistance they had received in registration.

Forty-five percent reported it was "good" (refer to Table 9). About one student in four felt it was "fair," and twelve percent thought the assistance they had received was "poor." Sixteen percent of the respondents claimed the assistance was "excellent."

Only about thirty percent of the graduates who responded proved to be veterans. Over seventy percent of the respondents indicated that an assessment of veterans' counseling was impractical because it did not apply. The modal response for those who did evaluate veterans' counseling was "good." Thirty-one percent of those returning questionnaires provided this rating (refer to Table 10). Fourteen percent of the respondents rated the counseling as "excellent" and about the same percentage considered the counseling they received to be "poor." Seventeen percent thought the counseling was "fair."

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the questionnaire involved the comments offered. An unusually high number of respondents offered supplemental comments in the space provided and on the back of the instrument itself. Over one-fourth of those receiving questionnaires chose to make comments. Some of the narratives were in fact copious.

The comments were generally of three types. Some offered praise, others suggestions, and still others criticism. Unfortunately, those offering criticism were the most numerous. Of the comments that could be summarized in one of these three catagories, 19 percent dealt with praise, 22 percent involved suggestions, and 59 percent concerned criticisms.

Table 8

Summary of Respondents
By Satisfaction With Academic
Counseling

| Rating | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 12 | 13 |
| Good | 32 | 33 |
| Fair | 28 | 29 |
| Poor | 9 | 10 |
| No Opinion | 6 | 6 |
| Does Not Apply | 8 | 8 |
| No Response | 1 | 1 |
| | 96 | 100 |

Table 9

Summary of Respondents
By Satisfaction With Registration
Assistance

| Rating | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 15 | 16 |
| Good | 43 | 45 |
| Fair | 25 | 26 |
| Poor | 12 | 12 |
| No Opinion | 1 | 1 |
| Does Not Apply | 0 | 0 |
| No Response | 0 | 0 |
| | 96 | 100 |

Table 10

Summary of Respondents
by Satisfaction With Veterans'
Counseling

| Rating | N | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent | 4 | 14 |
| Good | 9 | 31 |
| Fair | 5 | 17 |
| Poor | 3 | 10 |
| No Opinion | 6 | 21 |
| No Response | 2 | 7 |
| | 29 | 100 |

Some comments dealt with instruction. However, the great majority dealt with counseling and registration.

Typical of the comments that were praiseworthy was the following:

> I give credit for the hard work or help Mr. ____ _____ gave me while I was at Leeward Col., to all the staff of the registrar, especially the veterans assistance section. Keep up the good work. A course in automotive mechanic during the night will work good.

Most of the suggestions involved a plea for more courses and more evening offerings. Typical of this type of comment was the remark, "I would like to see more night courses available." Many of the criticisms also focused on the lack of sufficient courses. However, in another criticism one graduate complained, "Counselors tend to emphasize their own interest areas rather than take into consideration the student's view."

Another typical comment was as follows:

> Though I considered academic counseling fair, I really didn't seek out academic counseling. My first experience with a counselor didn't provide me with any more information than what I already knew, so I never bothered to go back. But if I had encountered a more interested counselor, perhaps I would have benefited more from academic counseling.

All comments that were legible are included in Attachment A. They have been reproduced exactly as they appeared. No corrections for spelling or grammar have been made. Only the names of individuals have been deleted.

## Summary

The great majority of students who applied for the Associate of Science degree or Certificate of Achievement in the vocational-technical area for the academic year 1973-74 were willing to evaluate the program itself and the counseling they had received.

Most of the students in the study population had successfully pursued the Associate of Science degree. However, those obtaining the Certificate of Achievement

provided the most complete return. The vocational areas that were the most heavily subscribed were secretarial science and accounting. About one in five students felt they didn't need counseling, but over 40 percent reported that they could have benefited from additional counseling.

It was unfortunate that those students who did not complete a program or apply for a degree were not included in the survey. Had their opinions been obtained, we might have a more precise picture of the adequacy of the existing counseling services. The perception of the students regarding quality of academic counseling proved uneven. About 30 percent felt it was "good" and an additional 13 percent considered it to be "excellent." However, about one student in ten claim it was "poor."

An analysis of the comments provided by students proved most interesting. Many reported that they experienced a lack of success in the academic and general education courses to which they were advised. Some complained of unrealistically high standards and academic snobbery. However, this group represented a small minority.

The great majority of students felt the college is doing its best to meet their needs relative to the registration process. However, there is a substantial minority who are frustrated with, what they believe to be, an inadequate number of relevant courses. Another group is annoyed with the dearth of vocational offerings in the evening.

Most of the respondents were not veterans. Those who did respond as veterans felt that the veterans' counseling program was either good or had improved subsequent to their leaving the program.

## Recommendations

1. The function of academic counseling for vocational education majors needs to be more adequately studied. The responsibilities entailed in this activity need to be clearly spelled out and in some cases delimited.

2. The idea of directing students in the vocational-technical programs into general education courses especially organized to meet their particular needs should be considered. The instructional staff selected to teach such courses should be those persons who are most understanding and sympathetic to the problems of such students.

3. More courses designed for vocational-technical majors need to be provided. The demand is particularly heaviest in the Secretarial and Accounting fields. An analysis of the existing job market indicates these are two vocations where there is still a demand for qualified people despite the recession.

4. Particular attention needs to be addressed to meeting the needs of evening students. In the students' view, not enough courses are presently available to meet the demand after 4:30.

Attachment A

Comments Volunteered as Part
of the Supplemental Follow-up
Survey of Vocational Education
Graduates

COMMENTS VOLUNTEERED AS PART OF THE

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GRADUATES
University of Hawaii Community Colleges
1973-74
Leeward Community College

***

Leeward needs more Science & Creative Arts subjects offered at night to enable a night student to major in the RIP Program.

***

At the time I was attending Leeward, counseling for veterans was a little poor, but since graduating I have heard that a Veteran Council was established.

***

Start electrical app repair or welding for night courses which would be more use for veterans learning a trade.

***

Didn't know counseling was available other than for registration. Only helpful one was Mrs. ____ (not sure of name anymore but was the head in charge at the time).

***

Counselor know their job.

***

Some unfriendly service in the administration.

***

Registration assistance could use a better system to accommodate students, especially the new students...

***

I really haven't been exposed to academic counseling very much but when I was, it was very good. As far as the student employment center, I have a different opinion.

***

They should have a 4 year program at Leeward Community College in Business and other fields of study as well.

***

I enjoyed very much going to Leeward and I appreciate all that it's done for me. I just hope that every student can get as much out of Leeward as I did. I have learned to become an independent and self-disciplined person.

***

One of the most important & nicest thing that happened to me was opportunity to attend LCC.

***

Mr. ___ did give specific answers to my question.

***

COMMENTS (continued)

***

Though I considered academic counseling fair, I really didn't seek out academic counseling. My first experience with a counselor didn't provide me with any more information than what I already knew, so I never bothered to go back. But if I had encountered a more interested counselor, perhaps I would have benefited more from academic counseling.

***

During registration, I could not find anyone for assistance. If there was someone to help me, I think more information should be passed on to me and signs showing where these people can be found.

***

You needed a course in med sec bus so I have to go to Kapiolani. I was put as a night student when I marked day. I have over 60 credits but I didn't get priority in registration this last time.

***

I would like to see more night courses available.

***

The office administration could be more organized and more friendly & nice. They weren't as much help as I thought they would be. Also, the efficiency isn't there, most times they'd lose someone's card or some kind of information.

***

I give credit for the hard work or help Mr. ____ _____ gave me while I was at Leeward Col., to all the staffs of the registrar, especially the veterans assistance section. Keep up the good work. A course in automotive mechanic during the night will work good.

***

My counselor didn't know my field. I felt I took my courses in the wrong order.

The instructor was too harsh. We are only beginner and she should not give us such a heavy load at the very beginning.

The counselor should inform the LT student of their future approximate wages. I did not find out until I graduated.

Work-Study Program
LT 5 very important--actual experience if doesn't tie in with the grade I get in school because Ms. ____ expects perfection. She's asking too much.

I feel that the survey card needs more room to write our comments, i.e., no one told me about registering for graduation.

I think the LT exam could be updated, the questions are tricky. She never gave back our final exam paper. I'll never forget Ms. ____ saying "What's a piece of paper." (in reference to my Certificate). I was very hurt. I felt her to be wrong about me because I got A's in LT 5 and Audio Visual and only D's in her class.



***

COMMENTS (continued)

***

Counselors tend to emphasis their own interest areas rather than take into consideration the student's view.

Instructors should be more flexible and consider the students with different learning rates. (Fast and slow learners.)

There should be a wider choice of subjects at the school. These subjects should be aimed at the senior citizens with emphasis on post retirement years. Examples of subject in the "Pau Hana" area are: 1. Horticulture; 2. gardening; 3. etc.

***

Due to little or no counseling, I may spend more time and more money at the U of H. Apparently you people seem to depend on people like me!

Well wake up will you, because your no better than men, whose locked up for less.

Need some more. Ask anytime! Thank you.

***

The co-op program gave me a start. Even though I didn't stay on the same job, I could still use that experience as a reference. It made my next application look good. The training has been invaluable. The basics are definitely essential, but experience at an on-the-job site proves to be the best teacher. One learns to cope with delicate and awkward situations that are not written in text books.

As far as suggestions to the training, personally I was a complete novice as far as telephone useage in a business office. Poor telephone courtesy could lead to loss of customers as well as a loss of invaluable time.

I believe the role playing we had in Office Procedures were very helpful but should be extended to include wider areas, i.e., secretary-boss interactions, secretary-staff relationship et al.

***

I feel that the vocational students need a program whereby students might avail themselves of courses numbering 100 and above in the business fields,

High schools offer the lesser courses so it seemed a disadvantage to many business students to be required to take the lower numbered courses only to have them "kick out" if the student later decides to go for a B.S. in one of the business fields at a university.

You have highly qualified instructors in the Business Department so there should be few obstacles to implementing a higher numbered business curriculum.

***

COMMENTS (Continued)

***

Advise the beginning students during registration counseling that most of their major courses would be closed out by the time they choose their preferred courses so they should select or concentrate on the alternate program. Some of them become so frustrated that they end up with only couple of courses, so they won't be able graduate in the 2 years for their A.S. degree.

I went thru this hassle when I first registered and took me over 2 hours because majority of my preferred program were closed. Even my friends that registered the following year had the same problem.

This is like going through the chow line and getting the left overs or the crumbs. But if you are made aware of the situation, you won't feel too bad about it. A little more communication would ease the pain.

***

Attachment B

Supplemental Survey Instrument Used
in the Follow-up Survey of
Vocational Education Graduates

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GRADUATES
University of Hawaii Community Colleges
1973-74
Leeward Community College

1. What did you major in while at Leeward C.C.? _____

2. Did you earn a degree or a certificate? Degree____ Certificate____

3. Were you a day student or a night student? Day____ Night____

4. Did you receive academic counseling while in college?
   [] Yes
   [] No
   [] I did not need academic counseling

5. Would you have preferred less, the same, or more academic counseling?
   [] Less
   [] The same
   [] More
   [] This question does not apply to me

6. How would you rate these school services?

   a. Academic counseling
      [] Excellent
      [] Good
      [] Fair
      [] Poor
      [] Don't know
      [] Does not apply to me

   b. Registration assistance during the registration period
      [] Excellent
      [] Good
      [] Fair
      [] Poor
      [] Don't know
      [] Does not apply to me

   c. Veteran's Affairs (for those who required veteran assistance)
      [] Excellent
      [] Good
      [] Fair
      [] Poor
      [] Don't know
      [] Does not apply to me

7. Other comments (optional):

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(use other side if necessary)